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## Fonts

### Overview

Fonts organize information within the interface and create a particular mood of the interface whether in a Windows application or a web-based application using HTML. By varying the style, size and weight of the font, the CDC developer can communicate the importance of the text, and even the order in which it should be read. Too much variation, or choosing the wrong style font, can have a negative impact on the readability of the screen. If users can't read the screen easily, performing their tasks will be more difficult than necessary.

### General Font Standards

The following font standards are to be adopted across all CDC Windows software applications and web-based applications using HTML. These standards should lead to a more consistent and usable interface.

#### *Font Style*



***Choose only from CDC standard font styles in accordance with the intended use***

To avoid visual clutter and guarantee a font that will enhance the interface, developers will use only those fonts that are shown below:

#### **CDC Standard Fonts**

<b>Font Style</b>	<b>Intended Use</b>
Arial	All text, controls, widgets, etc. in a text intensive application where a smaller dimension (in terms of length and width) is needed to save space.
Verdana	All text, controls, widgets, etc. in a less text intensive application where a larger dimension is appropriate
Courier	All text where proportionality and alignment is critical such as in tabular data or code examples

For additional information on how to specify font selections within web-based applications, please see the section entitled *HTML Specific Standards*

## Font Size



*Choose only from CDC Standard font sizes for normal text, controls, widgets, etc.*

<i>Arial</i>	<i>10 pt</i>
<i>Verdana</i>	<i>9 pt</i>

Font sizes, while similar for each typeface, are often not standardized. For example, all of the typefaces shown below are 10 pt but are not the same size in dimension (length and width).

This is 10 point Arial

This is 10 point Verdana



*Use appropriate font sizes and styles for sub-titles, group box titles and instructional text*

**Sub Titles**

Sub Titles

**Arial 14 pt bold**

Verdana 13 pt bold

**Group Box Titles**

Group Box Titles

**Arial 10 pt bold**

Verdana 9 pt bold



*Avoid all UPPERCASE unless representing variable names in a database*

Variable names may be formatted in uppercase in the database and displayed to the user in the appropriate uppercase format where necessary. All other words formed with all capital letters are monotonous rectangles that offer few distinctive shapes to catch the eye making it much more difficult to read. In addition, all uppercase words make it appear as if you are SHOUTING at the user.

## Font Standard Example

The screenshot shows a Windows-style application window titled "CDC System Name - Patient Record". The window has a menu bar with "File", "Edit", "View", and "Help". The main content area is titled "Patient Record" and contains several form sections. Red arrows point from yellow callout boxes to specific text elements: "Sub Title: 14" points to the "Patient Record" title; "Group Box Text:" points to the "Person Name" section header. The "Person Name" section includes fields for Prefix (Mr), Last (Anderson), First (Jackson), Middle (Robert), Preferred (Jack), and Maiden. The "Address" section includes fields for Block/Street (5555 Main Street Apt. 2312), Zip Code (75065-2312), City/Town (Corinth), County (Denton), State/US Territory (Texas), Country (United States), and Phone ((972) 555-1111 x4321). There are also checkboxes for "Validated Phone" (Y (Yes)). To the right of the address section are fields for Sex (M (Male)), Stated Age (39), Age Type (1 (Years)), Ethnicity (N (Not Hispanic or Latino)), and Race (American Indian or Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific, White, Other Race). At the bottom of the window are "Add" and "Cancel" buttons, and a status bar with the text "Instructional message or mouseover info placed here", the time "3:49 PM", and the date "1/6/2000".

**Sub Title: 14**

**Group Box Text:**

**Person Name**

Prefix: Mr \* Last: Anderson

\* First: Jackson Middle: Robert

Preferred: Jack Maiden:

**Address**

\* Block/ Street: 5555 Main Street Apt. 2312

Zip Code: 75065-2312

\* City/Town: Corinth County: Denton

\* State/US Territory: Texas Country: United States

Phone: (972) 555-1111 x4321 = Validated Phone: Y (Yes)

**Sex:** M (Male)

**Stated Age:** 39

**Age Type:** 1 (Years)

**Ethnicity:** N (Not Hispanic or Latino)

**Race:**

- ☐ American Indian or Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other Race

**Add** **Cancel**

Instructional message or mouseover info placed here 3:49 PM 1/6/2000

## General Font Guidelines

The following guidelines have been established within the Windows user interface design community and should be applied across CDC software applications and web-based applications using HTML.

### *Respect the end user's font selections*

It is important to consider the user's font choices. Override the end user's font selections only when absolutely necessary using the CDC standard font styles.

### *Avoid using bold and italic fonts*

Use bold fonts to attract attention and italic fonts for emphasis, but do so rarely and with consistency.

***Avoid mixing typefaces***

Limit the number of fonts and styles you use in the user interface. Too many fonts result in visual clutter. While web style applications occasionally use font variations to establish a particular mood and style, Windows applications should not mix typefaces.

**HTML Specific Standards**

The following standards are to be adopted across all CDC web-based applications using HTML. These standards are intended to lead to a more consistent and usable interface.

***Use style sheets***

Style sheets are to be used to achieve stylistic and formatting changes, including those related to fonts. HTML font presentational attributes have been deprecated when style sheet alternatives exist. A deprecated element or attribute is one that has been outdated by newer constructs. Deprecated elements may become obsolete in future versions of HTML.

***Specify the fonts Verdana, Arial, Helvetica for all non-proportional text, controls and widgets in the order listed***

Many computers only have the basic default operating fonts for Windows installed. If the font style you specify is not available on the user's computer, the browser will switch to the default font. To increase the chances that the user will see a font that fits the interface design, specify multiple fonts in the order shown above.

**HTML Specific Guidelines**

For web based applications using HTML, the following guidelines are recommended and should be applied across CDC web-based applications using HTML.

***Avoid Decorative Fonts***

Decorative fonts may be used to establish the mood of an interface for some web-based applications. Despite their existence, decorative fonts should be avoided.

***Use font weight and size variations sparingly***

Stylistic and formatting effects similar to Windows applications can be achieved in HTML by varying the weight and style of the font. This should be done primarily through the use of system and browser defaults. The table titled *Heading Defaults* lists the defaults used by most HTML tools. Other font sizes should be used sparingly in the body of the text.

**Heading Defaults**

Font Size	HTML	Purpose
10pt (bold)	<H5>	Normal Text
12pt (bold)	<H4>	Group Box and Instructional Text
14pt (bold)	<H3>	Sub Titles

18pt (bold)	<H2>	<i>Not Recommended for Use</i>
24pt (bold)	<H1>	<i>Not Recommended for Use</i>

### **Recommended Readings**

McKay, Everett N. *Developing User Interfaces for Microsoft Windows*. Microsoft Press, 1999

Chapter 4 - Establishing a Consistent User Interface Style

Lynch, Patrick J.; and Horton, Sarah. *Web Style Guide: Basic Design Principles for Creating Web Sites*. Yale University Press, 1999

Chapter 5 - Typography

Howlett, Virginia. *Visual Interface Design for Windows*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996

Chapter 12 – Fonts

### **Helpful Web Sites**

The World Wide Web Consortium's page on font standards

<http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-html40/present/graphics.html#h-15.2>

The Microsoft Developers Network Online Library of Books, specifically the online version of *The Windows Interface Guidelines for Software Design*

<http://msdn.microsoft.com/isapi/msdnlib.idc?theURL=/library/books/winguide/PLATFRM2/D5/S115B5.HTM>

The Web Reviews online publication. Contains great in-depth articles on every aspect of web site authoring.

<http://www.webreview.com/wr/pub>